

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE DRUG POLICY AND HUMAN
RESOURCES**

REGARDING

**THREAT CONVERGENCE ALONG THE BORDER: HOW DOES DRUG
TRAFFICKING IMPACT OUR BORDERS**

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CHAIRMAN SOUDER, RANKING MEMBER CUMMINGS, AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, it is my honor to have the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the efforts U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is taking to stem the flow of illegal drugs crossing our Nation's borders. My name is Greg Passic, and within my capacity as Director of the Office of Drug Interdiction at CBP, I would like to discuss the multiple ways in which CBP coordinates intelligence and resources, both within DHS and throughout the federal government, in an effort to combat drug trafficking across our borders.

CBP, as the guardian of the Nation's borders, safeguards the homeland—foremost, by protecting the American public against terrorists and the instruments of terror, while at the same time enforcing the laws of the United States and fostering the Nation's economic growth through lawful travel and trade. Contributing to all this is CBP's time-honored duty of interdicting drugs and those who attempt to smuggle them across our borders. We cannot protect against the entry of terrorists and the instruments of terror without also reducing the flow of illegal drugs across our borders. The coordinated presence of CBP, strategically positioned at and between the ports of entry, as well as beyond our borders, enables the coordination of intelligence and resources in an increasingly effective manner. This coordination exists between the CBP Office of Field Operations, CBP Border Patrol, and CBP's Air and Marine Operations, and is further strengthened through regular interaction with other federal law enforcement agencies.

CBP OFFICE OF FIELD OPERATIONS

The CBP Office of Field Operations (OFO) has responsibility for traveler and cargo inspection operations at U.S. ports of entry. With more than 25,000 employees, including more than 19,000 CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists, CBP's OFO oversees the programs and operations at 20 Field Operations offices, 317 ports of entry and 14 preclearance stations in Canada and the Caribbean. Equipped with the appropriate mix of technology and training, CBP Officers are able to execute their primary mission of detecting and preventing terrorists and their weapons from entering the country, while also interdicting illegal drugs and other contraband, preventing the entry of inadmissible travelers, and enforcing food safety and trade laws at the border.

In keeping with our efforts to increase interdiction, CBP has developed a series of strategies aimed at getting better and timelier information about the people and merchandise headed to our shores. For example, we require carriers to provide advanced electronic information about the merchandise and people they intend to carry to a U.S. seaport or airport. At the ports, all travelers and cargo are subject to inspection. We further examine any travelers and cargo that are determined to warrant further scrutiny. In the cargo environment we use a variety of non-intrusive inspection (NII) technologies to quickly scan large shipments. The use of this technology allows CBP to examine more cargo than we could manually, and it maintains the integrity of the shipment if we want to begin a controlled delivery later. Furthermore, all CBP Officers are trained in questioning and observational techniques, which aids in identifying someone who may be smuggling narcotics.

CBP BORDER PATROL

Nearly 11,000 employees of CBP's Border Patrol are arrayed along, or proximate to the border with the primary mission of securing the border between ports of entry against terrorists, the means of terrorism, illegal drugs, and other illegal activity. The linkage between alien trafficking organizations operating in Mexico and the drug smuggling groups is well documented.

The CBP Border Patrol's National Strategy was formulated around a clear strategic goal: to improve control of the borders of the United States. The current Strategy embraces and builds upon the lessons learned from previous Border Patrol operational successes an all-threats strategy for all transnational criminal activity. Further, the strategy encompasses a defense-in-depth component through checkpoints that denies transport used to move illegal aliens or drugs away from the immediate border areas.

AIR AND MARINE OPERATIONS

CBP Air and Marine Operations (AMO) is the newest of CBP's three enforcement arms, having transferred from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in late 2004. AMO supports CBP's mission to secure our nation's borders against all threats, including the illegal drug trade.

CBP AMO's include 1,000 personnel, approximately 140 fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft and 73 high-speed marine vessels, including 4-engine P-3 Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircraft, CE-550 Citation Jet Interceptors, 40+ knot Midnight Express Interceptor vessels and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. AMO personnel routinely perform interdiction, intelligence and investigative missions on, beyond and inside the nation's borders.

AMO also provides aerial surveillance support to ICE and other federal law enforcement agencies, to include such missions as airborne monitoring of controlled deliveries and covert tracking of suspect ground and air vehicles.

Through the unique Air and Marine Operations Center (AMOC), located in Riverside, California, CBP intakes approximately 200 civilian and military radar feeds from around the United States, Canada and its borders and fuses that data with law enforcement, intelligence and flight plan databases to produce a real-time common operating picture without parallel throughout the federal government. The AMOC feed is used to effect real-time interdictions of suspect aircraft on the nation's borders.

CBP INTERACTION WITH OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES

CBP regularly cooperates with DEA through a coordinated enforcement / investigative effort which often includes DHS's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The role of CBP in these smuggling investigations usually comes in the form of supporting

controlled deliveries, in coordination with DEA and ICE, which provide intelligence and lead to greater numbers of seizures and arrests than if a shipment was simply seized at the border.

HOW CBP SHARES DRUG INTELLIGENCE

CBP coordinates and shares drug intelligence with other agencies through various means. At Southwest Border ports of entry, CBP has Intelligence Collection and Analysis Teams (ICAT) in place, which are an integral part of a port's narcotics interdiction efforts. Each ICAT is supported through personnel of CBP, ICE and other law enforcement agencies and resources. The activities of the ICAT are coordinated with the respective ICE entity. The fundamental mission of the ICAT is to produce actionable, tactical intelligence for dissemination to front line interdiction teams.

In the cargo environment on the southwest border the Cargo Analysis Research Investigative Team (CARIT) is in place. CARIT is a combined team of CBP officers, ICE and DEA agents and Intel analysis from CBP and the National Guard. The team gathers narcotic intelligence, processes narcotic seizures for control deliveries and conducts post seizure analysis.

We also work on a daily basis with the Office of Counter-Narcotics Enforcement (OCNE) and the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator (USIC). CBP recently hosted several meetings along the SWB with the Acting OCNE / USIC Director to discuss ways of including that office to assist us in strengthening our Drug Interdiction efforts.

RESULTS OF CBP EFFORTS

Mr. Chairman, the anti-narcotics efforts of CBP, in coordination with DHS and other agencies, are working. In any typical day, based on averages from fiscal year 2004 data, CBP executes 135 arrests at our ports of entry, and 3,179 arrests between ports of entry, many of these are drug-related. Also based on those averages, we seize an average of 5,947 pounds of narcotics at and between our ports of entry, over \$200,000 in currency, and over 190 firearms, many of which are used in the illicit drug trade. The men and women of CBP have made a commitment to serve the American public with vigilance, integrity and professionalism in carrying out this mission.

Thank you Chairman Souder, and Members of the Subcommittee, for allowing me the opportunity to testify before this Committee on CBP Drug Interdiction Operations. I will be happy to take any questions you may have.

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